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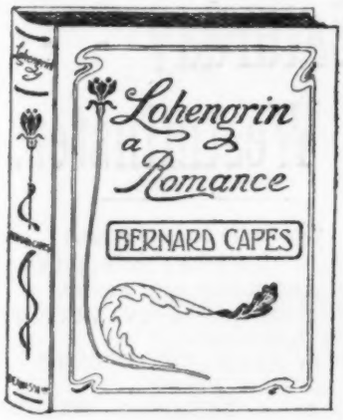

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The second annual general meeting of the shareholders of the Nerchinsk Gold Company, Limited, was held on Monday, at Winchester House, Old Broad-street, E.C., under the presidency of the Right Hon. the Earl of Dunmore (chairman), who in his opening remarks said that the directors had great satisfaction in stating that the point of crushing had practically arrived. The mills started work on June 10, with the result that the ore yielded 13 dwt., 8 dwt. by amalgamation, leaving 5 dwt. in tailings. This result could not be looked upon in any other light than a successful commencement of their crushings. (Applause.) A second consignment of mills is now in course of transit to the property, and when they are erected and at work they will give a crushing capacity of 100 tons per diem. Continuing, the Chairman remarked that as to the value of this concession, it would be difficult to estimate it. All those who had travelled in Siberia had unanimously pronounced it a country rich in rich minerals—rich almost beyond the dreams of avarice. It had been compared with South Africa, and favourably so; it has been compared equally with the best gold-producing districts of Australia, and he had even heard it prophesied that Mount Kluchi might some day, when fully developed, compare favourably with Mount Morgan.

Mr. J. Robbie Whamond said that the accounts were so clear in themselves that they required very little explanation; but he proposed to practically bring them up to date, having regard to the fact that those before the meeting were only brought down to June, 1904. The position at June 30, 1904, so far as mine development was concerned, represented an expenditure of £34,240. Since that date, and bringing it down practically to this date, the company had spent £11,432 (the expenses in London had been only £753), almost entirely on the property. The number of shareholders in the company had increased from practically 700 to 1,000 and that implied that there had been a very large turnover of shares and a substantial addition to the register. Dealing with the subject of the concession, Mr. Whamond said he was very glad to remind the meeting that over a year ago there were some substantial amendments made in the concession. The first one was that the deposit of £10,600 which had to be made to the Cabinet against the minimum revenue was reduced to £5,300. The next important concession was that the rent for the years 1902 and 1903, amounting to over £19,000, was entirely remitted, and in the final result the company was saved the cash payment of no less than £24,400. (Applause.) The next concession referred to the tax on gold from alluvial working. That was originally fixed at 15 per cent. and 12 per cent., according to the character of the gravel worked. It was then reduced to a uniform tax of 8 per cent., while the tax on the gold ore was now reduced from 10 per cent. to 6 per cent. Following on that, there was a reduction—and that was a very material point—in the annual rent, which, during the present year and the past year would have amounted to £10,600, to a uniform figure of £4,200. (Hear, hear.) The next point upon which they appealed to the Russian Government was the requirement of the Minister of Finance that they should make a deposit of £10,000 with his Department, for the purpose of guaranteeing anyone in Russia against any obligations which the company might incur. He (Mr. Whamond) was gratified to be able to say that, while they have not been able to annul that condition, they had postponed the fulfilment of it, and that it would not be necessary for them, until October next, to pay the first £5,000, the balance being payable six months later. The next question, which really presented no difficulty, was a condition that 50,000 fully paid-up shares in the company should be deposited with a Russian bank for two years. The speaker was glad to say that that matter had also been disposed of, as on Saturday the shares would be transferred to the Minister of Finance. That, therefore disposed of all the outstanding questions of liabilities which were referred to in the balance-sheet and would enable the company to withdraw that note on the publication of their next accounts. One other satisfactory circumstance was that while their condition and prospects as a company were materially improving during the past year, owing to the discovery of the Kluchi lode, its rapid development, its improved assays, etc., the Russian Government were also generously improving their conditions as regards the concession itself. It was perfectly clear, from a study of the assays which have been communicated to the meeting, that they had hit upon a reef of enormous magnitude, showing assays of high average value. You will remember that it was mentioned that wall-to-wall assays now reached 15 dwt. Having regard to the fact that it was originally considered that 7½ dwt. would be a very fine proposition, if 10 dwt. only was taken as the value, and deduct 5 dwt. for expenses, the company had still 5 dwt. left, which represented a profit of, say, £1 per ton per day. If, therefore, they were crushing, as they presently would be, 100 tons a day with the first preliminary plant, he would ask the meeting to figure out what would result if they had 60 heavy stamps at work. He thought they would find that they had one of the biggest mining propositions in the world. (Hear, hear.)

In conclusion, Mr. Whamond spoke in eulogistic terms of the servants of the company, and the Chairman then formally moved the adoption of the report and accounts.

Mr. E. F. Peirson, in an interesting address, supported the proposition, which, after remarks from Mr. Arthur L. Pearse (consulting engineer) bearing out Mr. Whamond's statements, was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Mr. A. H. Morrison moved the re-election as directors of Mr. E. F. Peirson and Mr. J. Robbie Whamond, and took the occasion to thank Mr. Whamond for the services he has rendered to the company. Mr. Ernest Polden seconded the resolution, which was also unanimously carried.

A vote of thanks to the chairman terminated the proceedings.

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Musical Studies. By Ernest Newman. (John Lane, 5s. net.) Essays on Berlioz, Faust in Music, Programme Music, Richard Strauss, &c.

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The Rainbow and the Rose. By E. Nesbit. (Longmans, 5s.) A volume of short lyrics on different subjects.

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Memoirs of Lady Fanshawe. Edited by Beatrice Marshall. (John Lane, 5s. net.) Lady Fanshawe was the wife of Sir Richard Fanshawe, Ambassador to Charles II. at the Courts of Portugal and Madrid, and the diary mainly relates to her life in Spain and Portugal.

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